Safe Routes to School

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NCDOT Safe Routes to School Coordinator

safe routes to school
north carolina

National Safe Routes to School Program

- Created under SAFETEA-LU
- Purposes of the Program:
  - ✓ to enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school
  - ✓ to make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age; and
  - ✓ to facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity of schools.

National Budget

$612,000,000

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Background

What has happened…

- In 1969 roughly half of all children walked or biked to school. Today, only about 15 percent walk or bike.

- There are more than three times as many overweight children today as there were 25 years ago.

- As much as 26% of morning rush hour traffic can be parents driving children to schools.

The results….

- Increased traffic congestion
- Declined childhood health
- Increased childhood obesity
- Deteriorating air quality
- Decreased community safety
- Increased fuel consumption
- Decreased community involvement

The consequences of this to….

…this can be alarming

The benefits of walking and bicycling...

Educational

- Increased concentration
- Improved mood and alertness
- Improved memory and learning
- Enhanced creativity

The benefits of walking and bicycling...

Health

- Decreased obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease
- Improved air quality around schools
- Better self esteem, a sense of responsibility and independence

Community

- Decreased traffic congestion
- More social interaction and community involvement
- Improved community safety and security
- Can lead to cost savings for schools (reduce need for "hazard" busing)
- Increase child's sense of freedom, help establish lifetime habits, teach pedestrian skills

What We Can No Longer Ignore

Today's children may be the first generation to have a shorter life expectancy than their parents have.

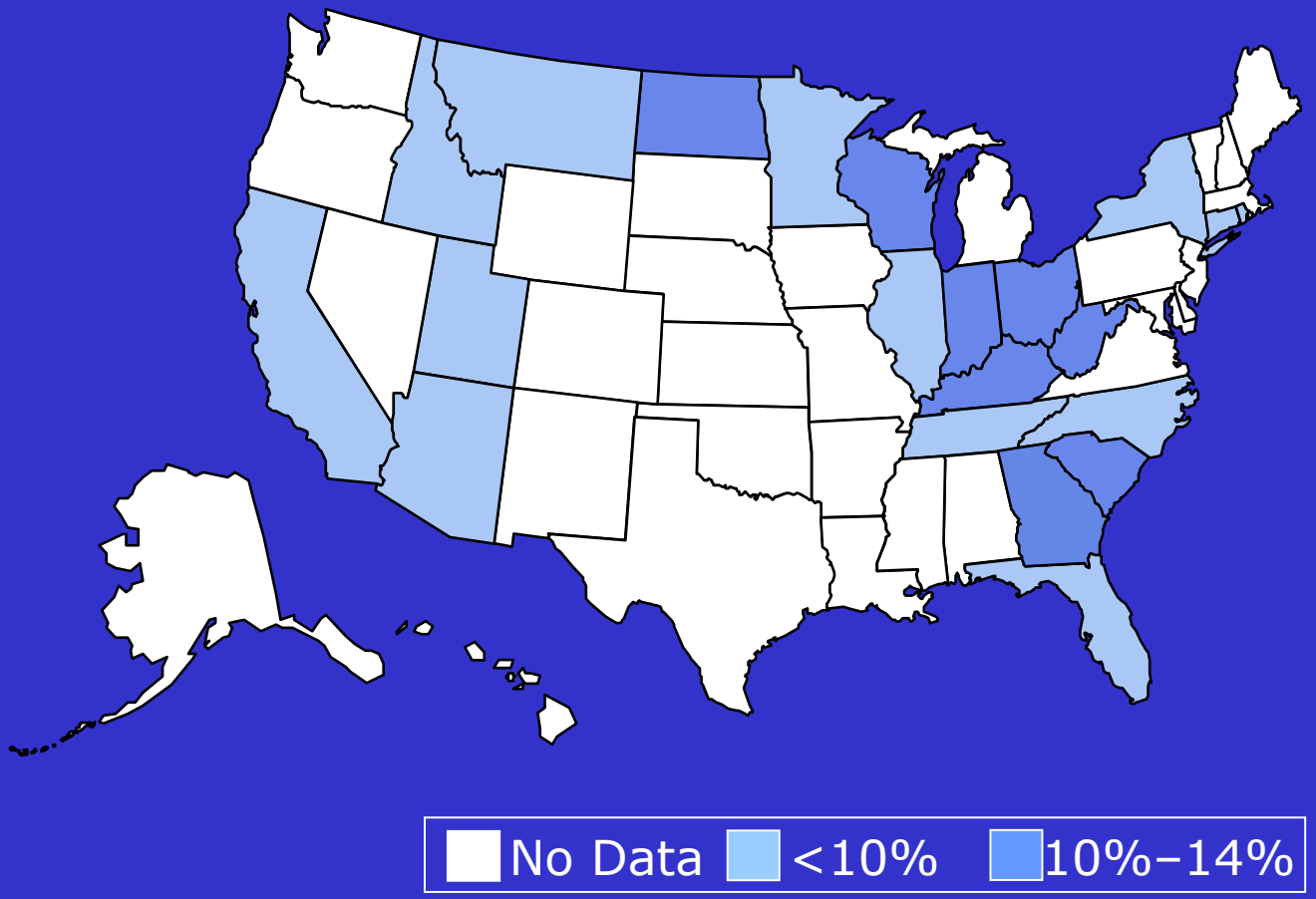
Obesity Trends

Amongst Adults

1985 - 2004

Obesity Trends Among U.S. Adults: 1985

(*BMI ≥30, or ~ 30 lbs overweight for 5’ 4” woman)



(Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, CDC, 2004)

Obesity Trends Among U.S. Adults: 1986

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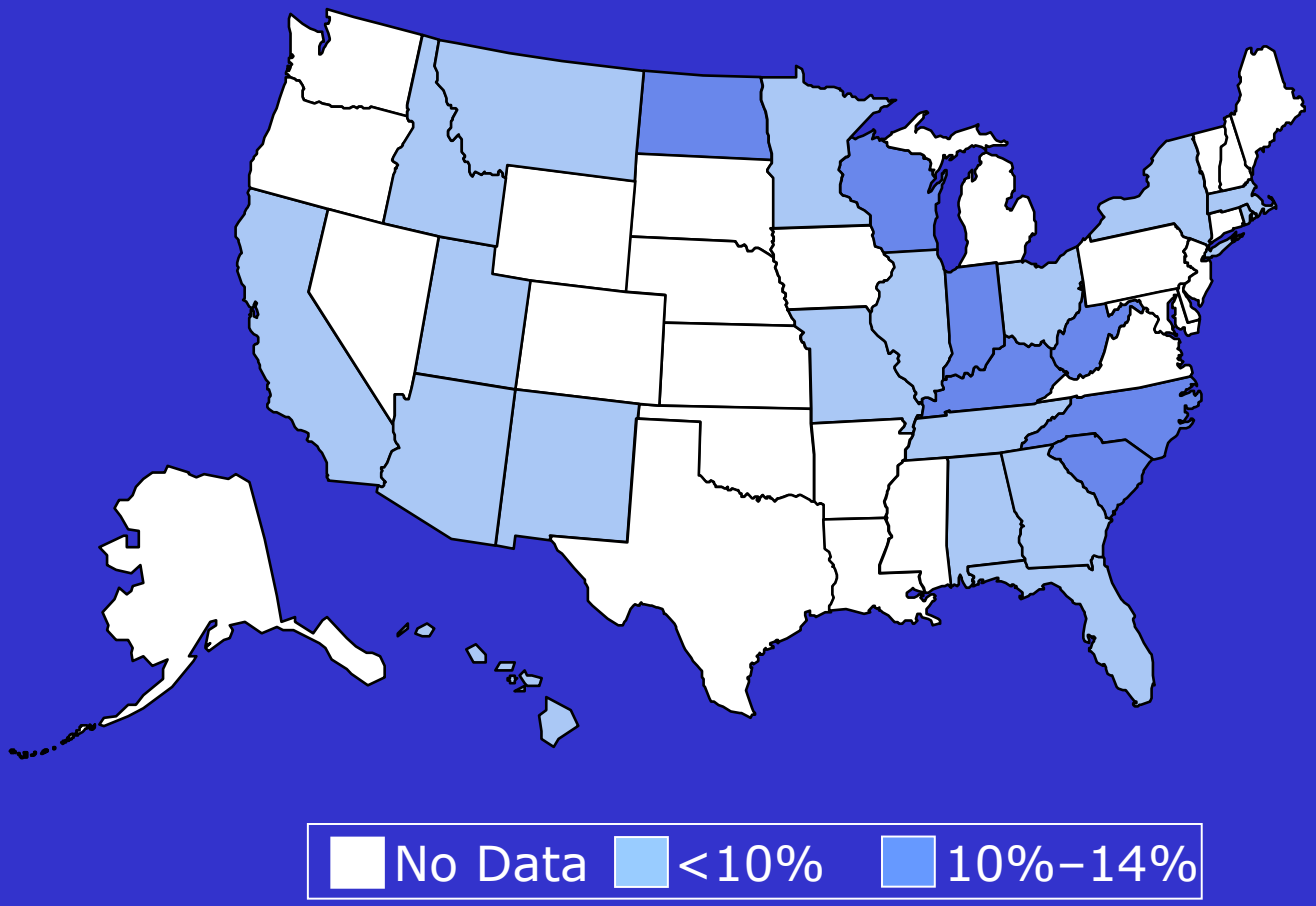

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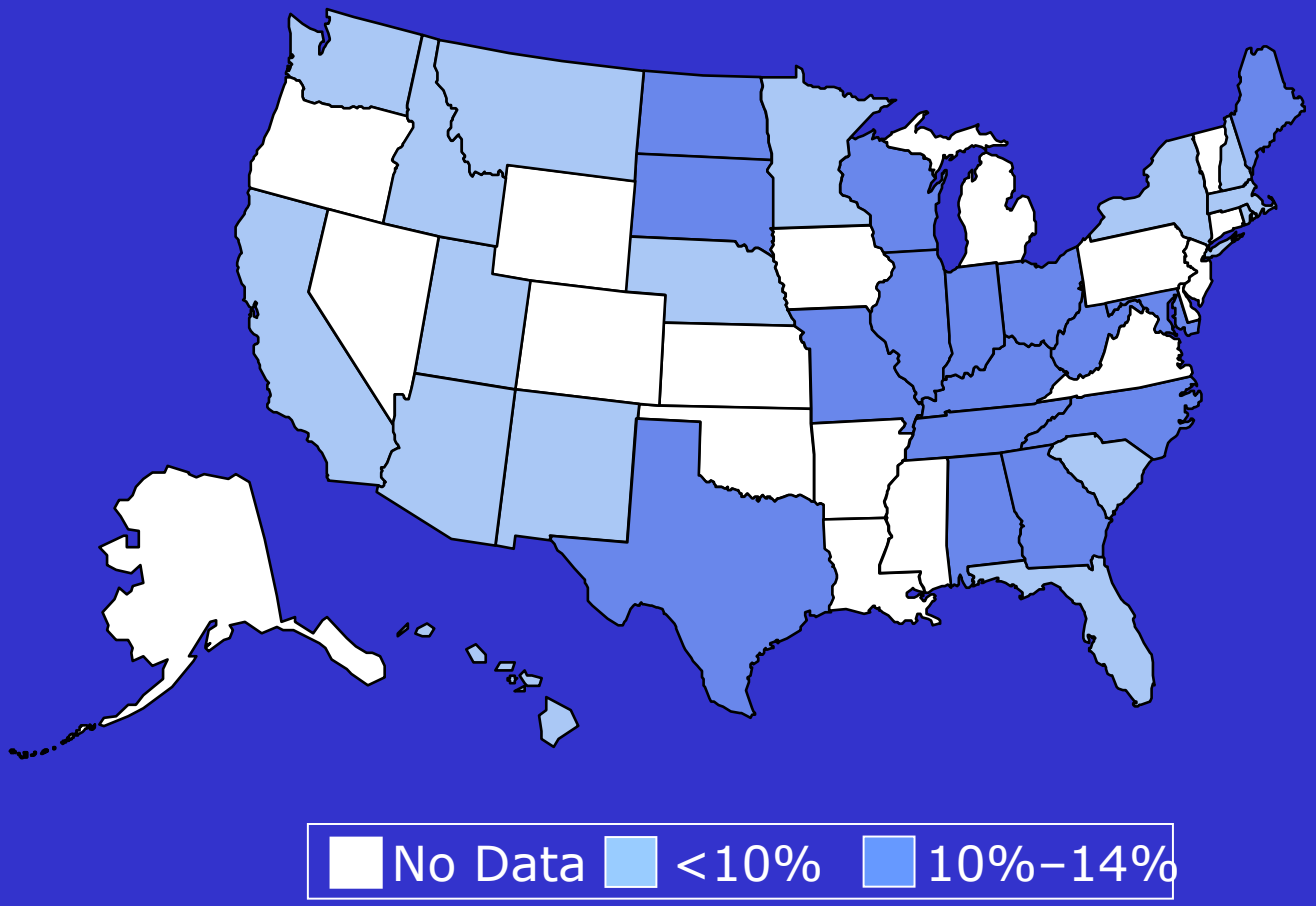

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Obesity Trends Among U.S. Adults: 1988

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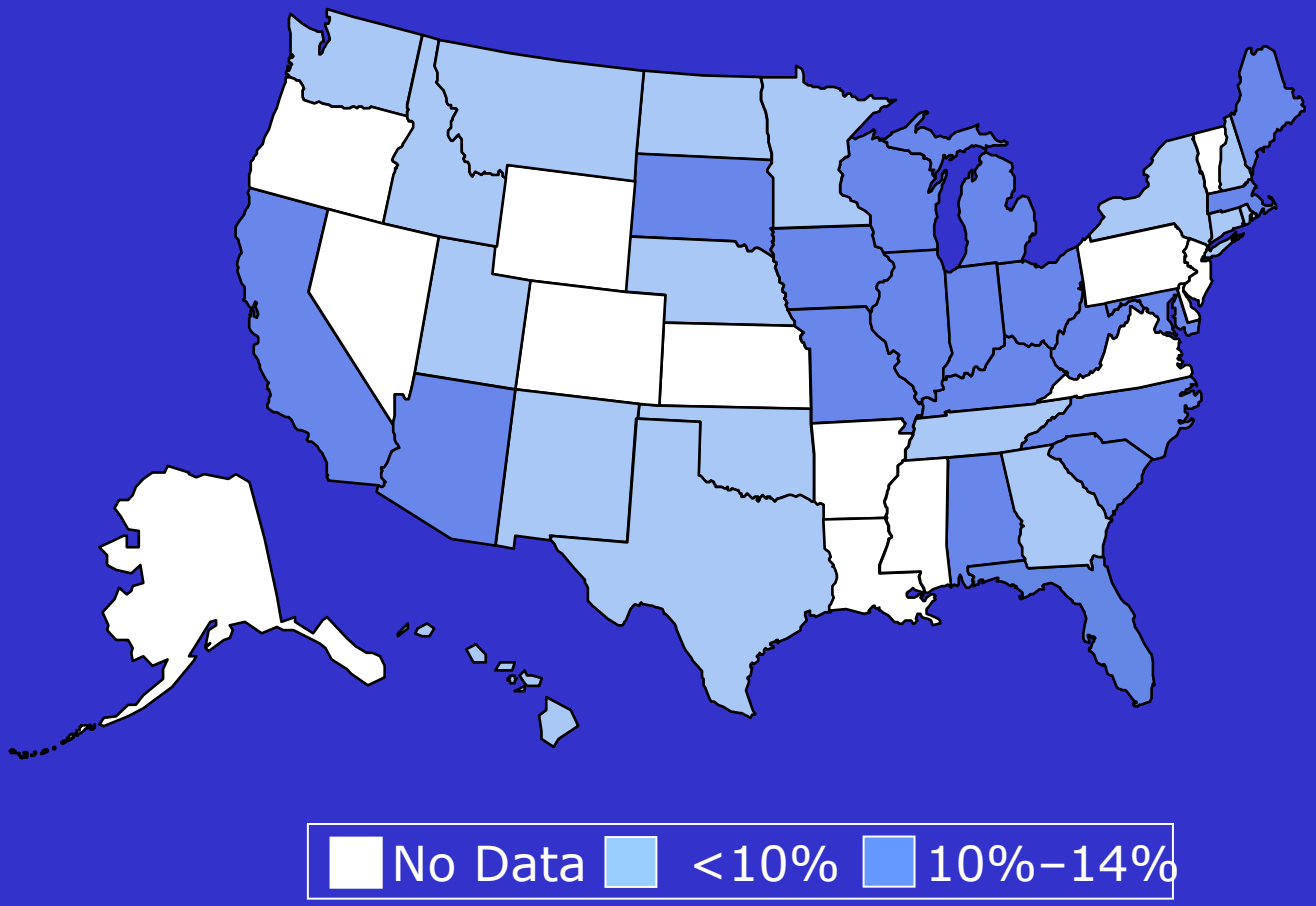

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Obesity Trends Among U.S. Adults: 1989

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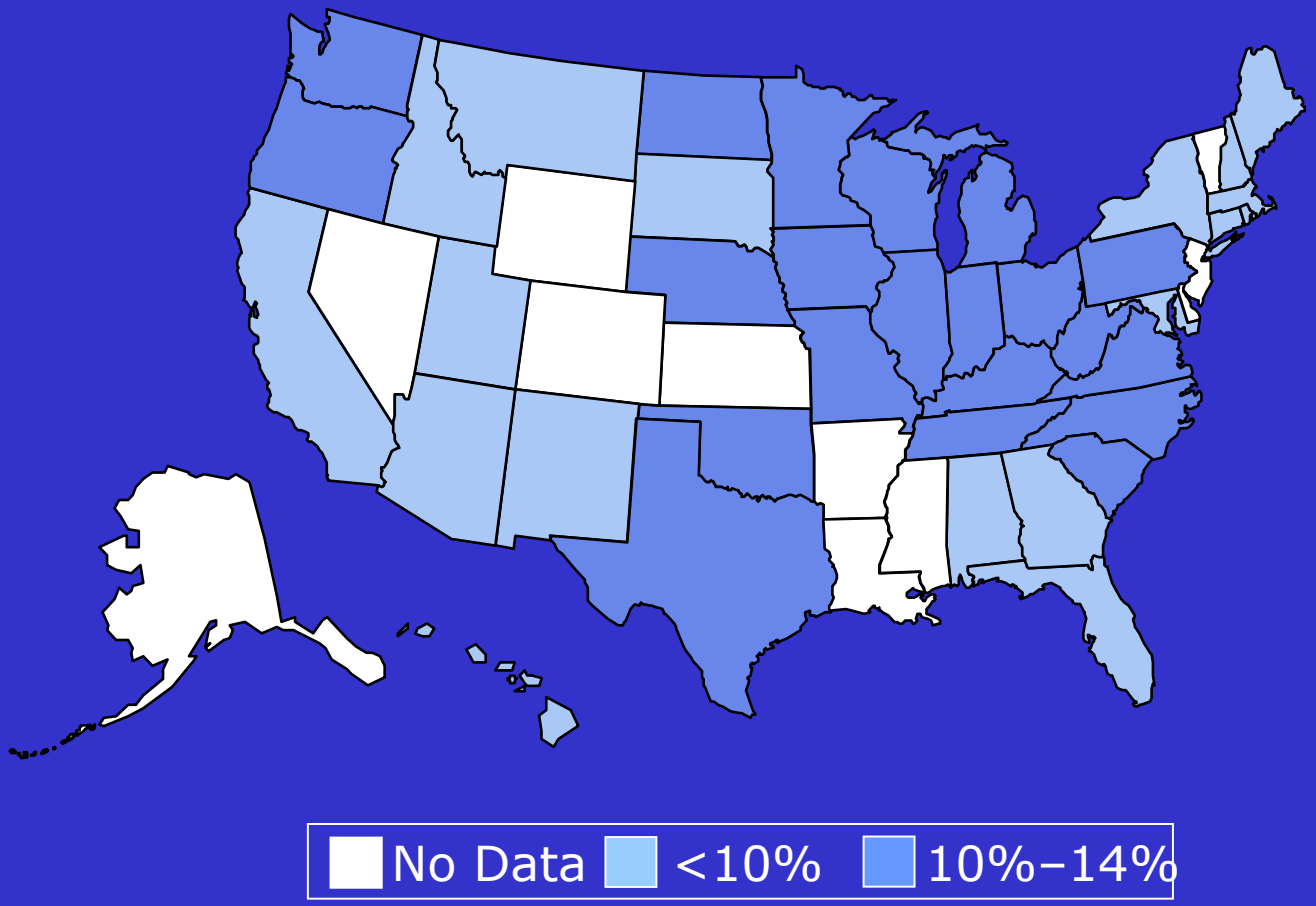

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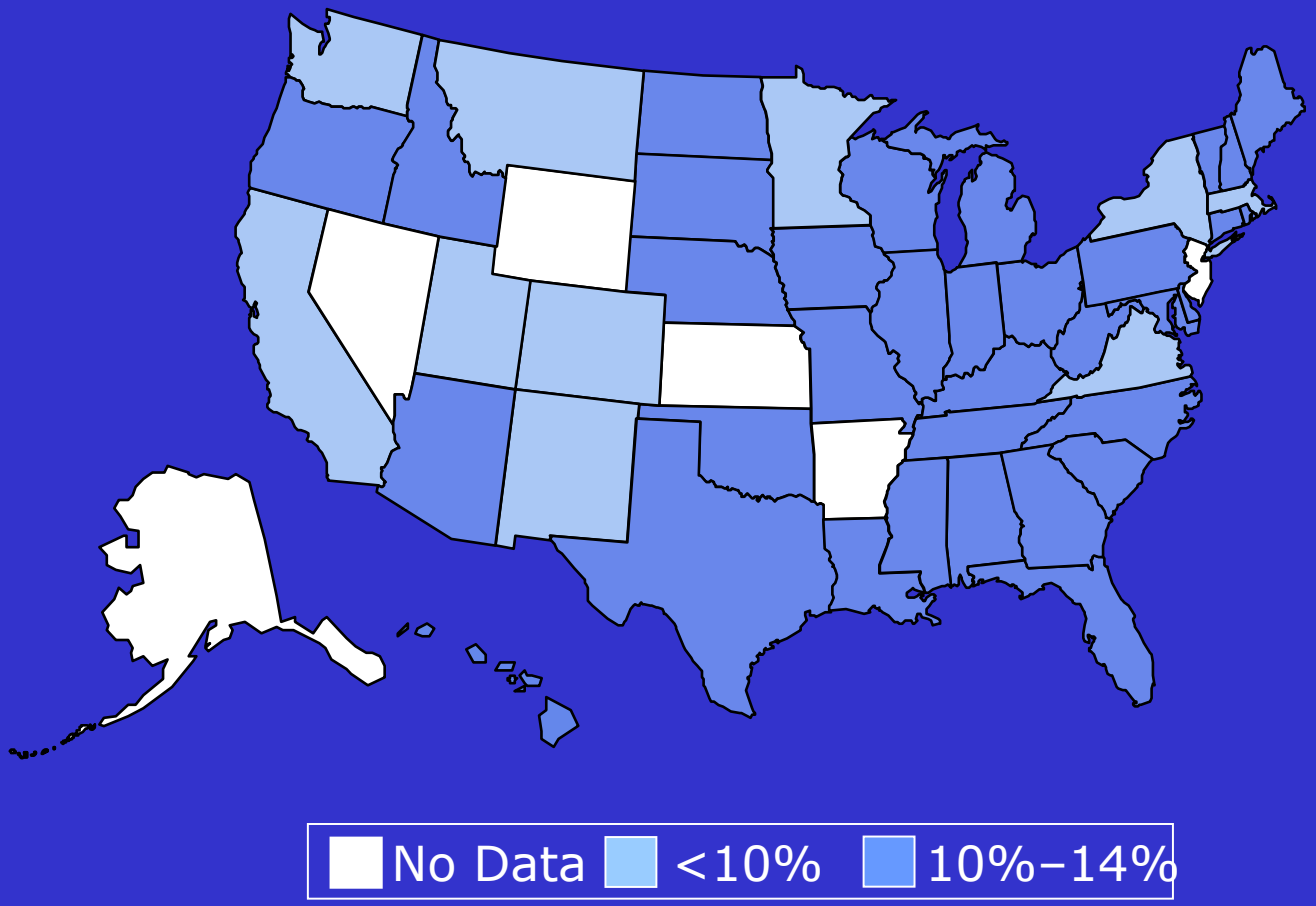

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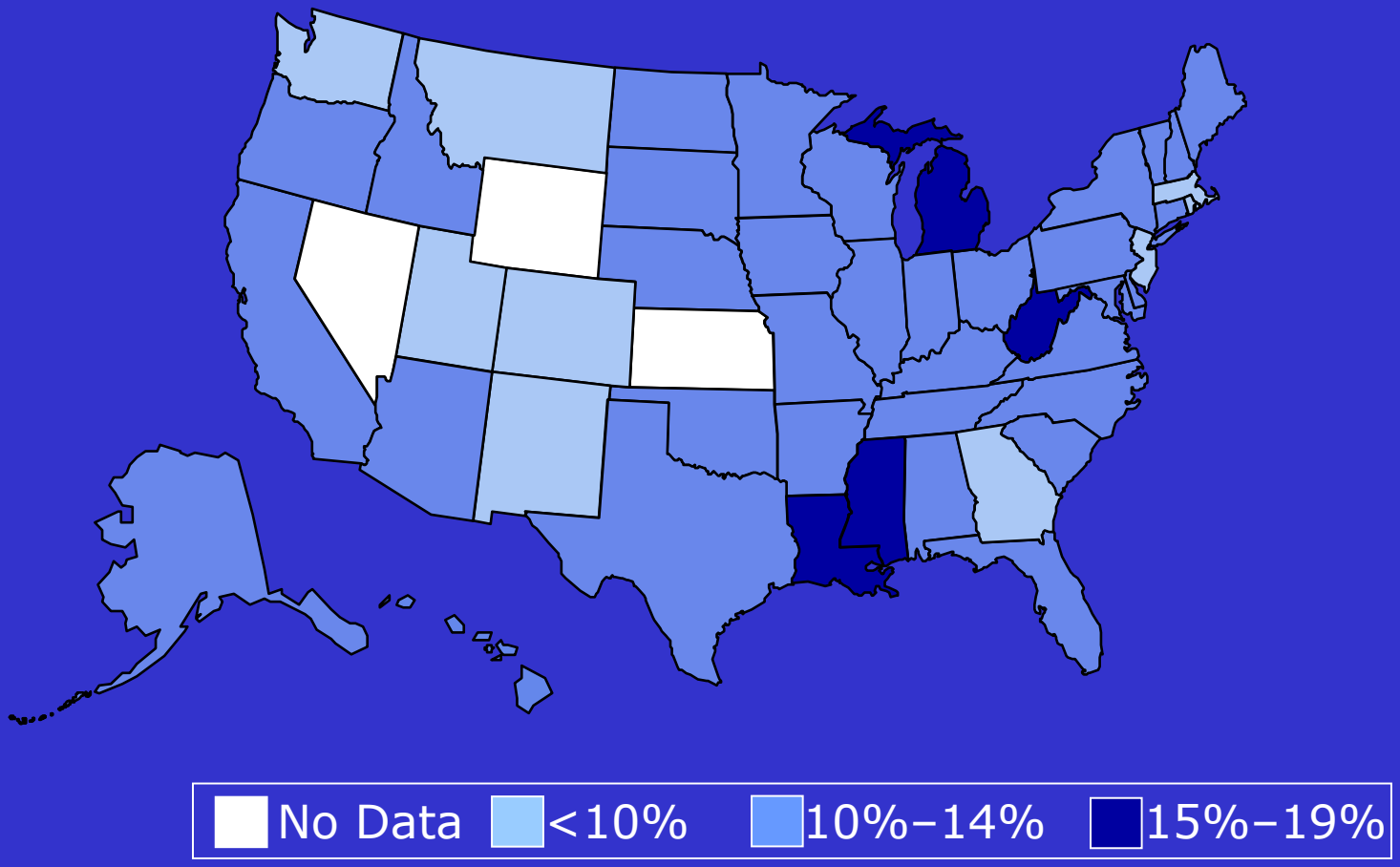

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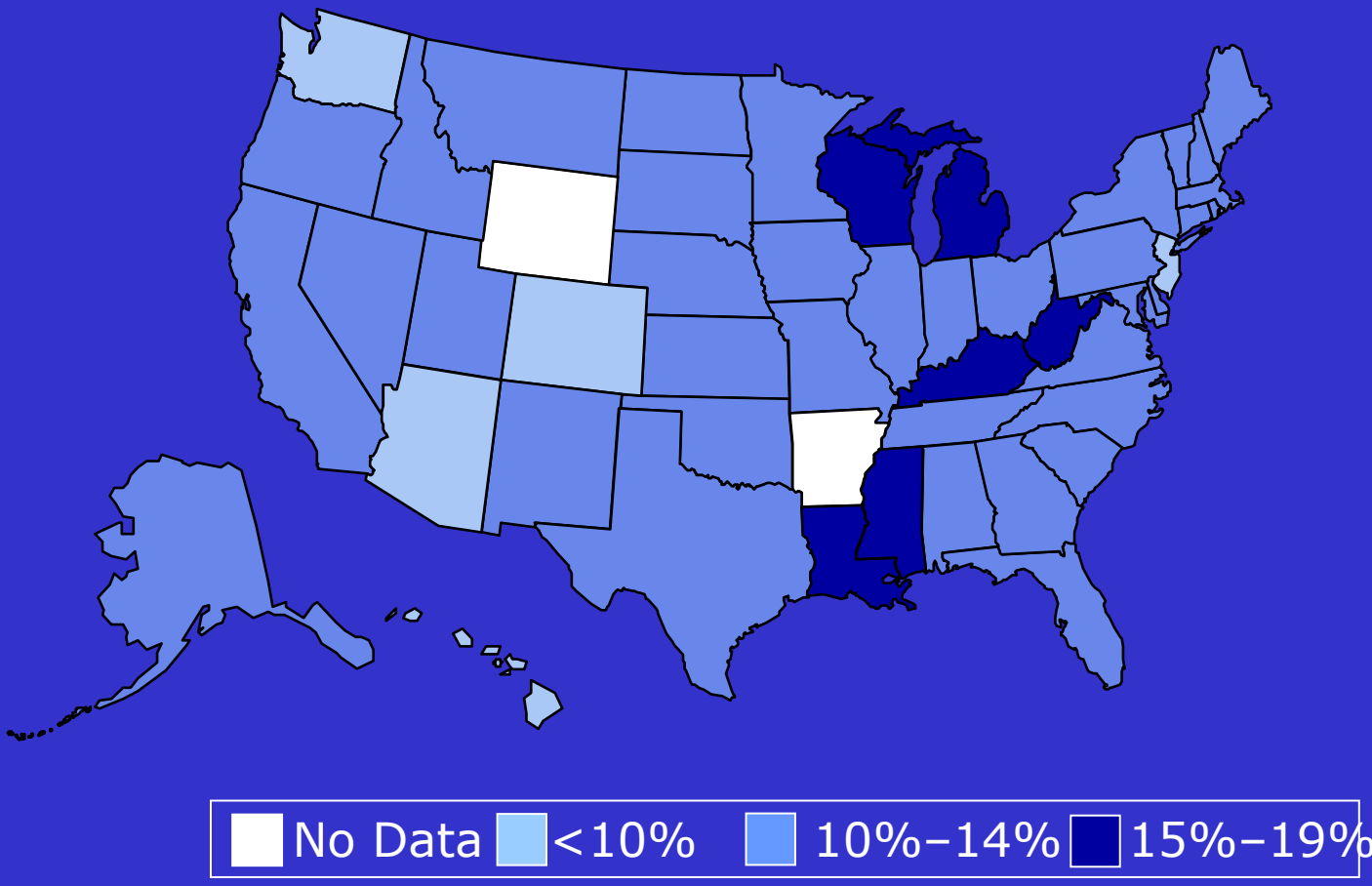

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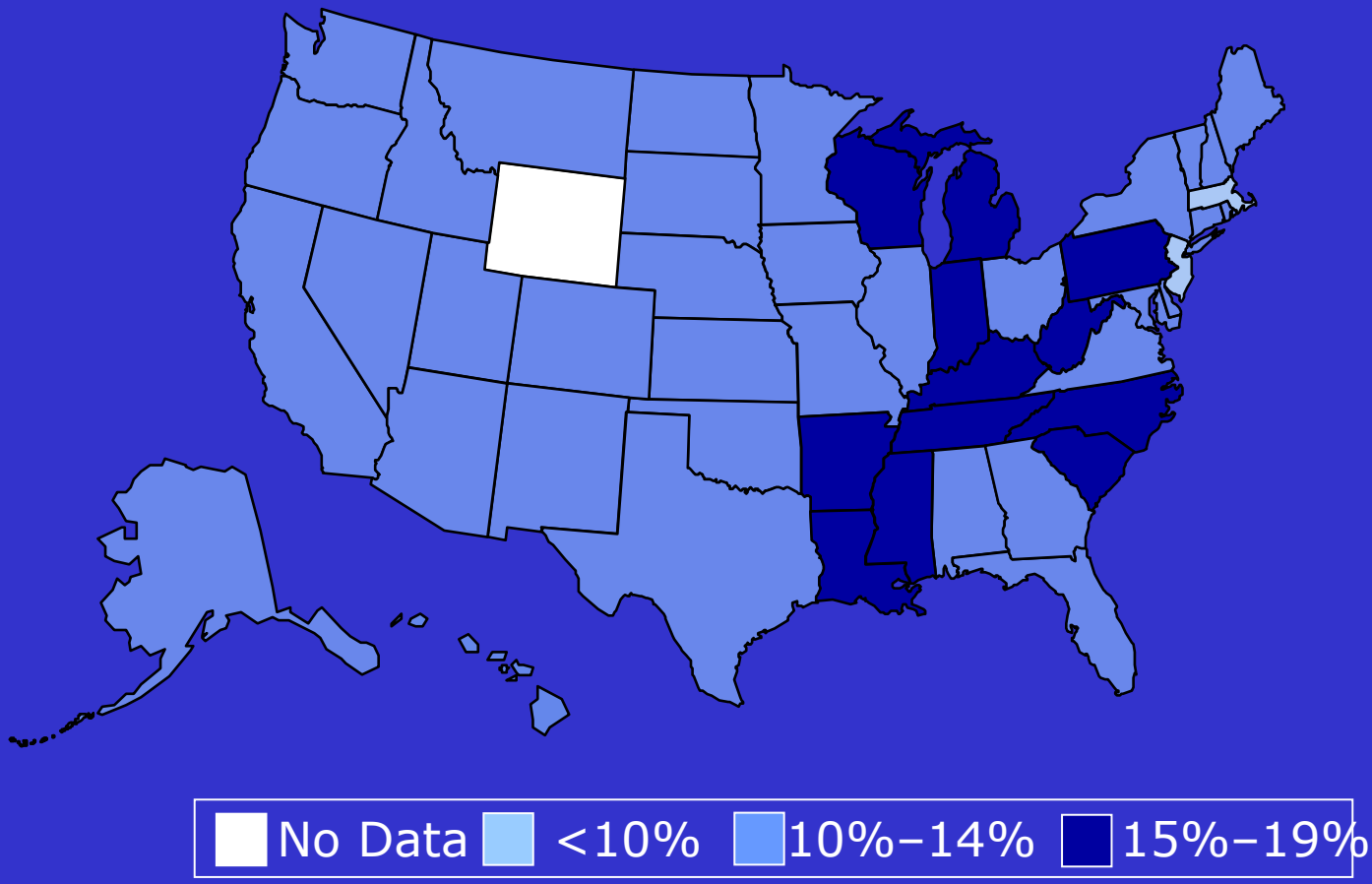

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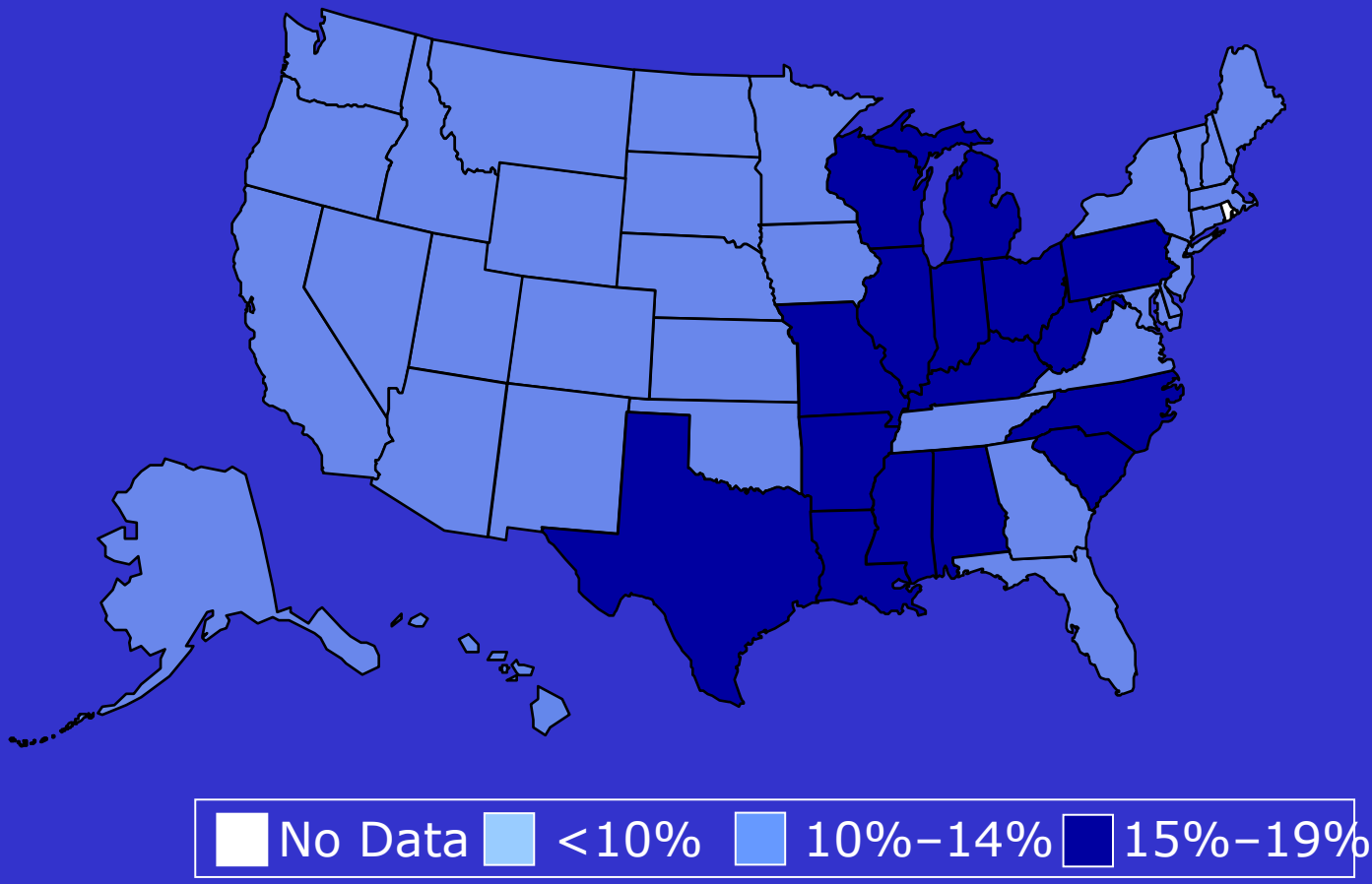

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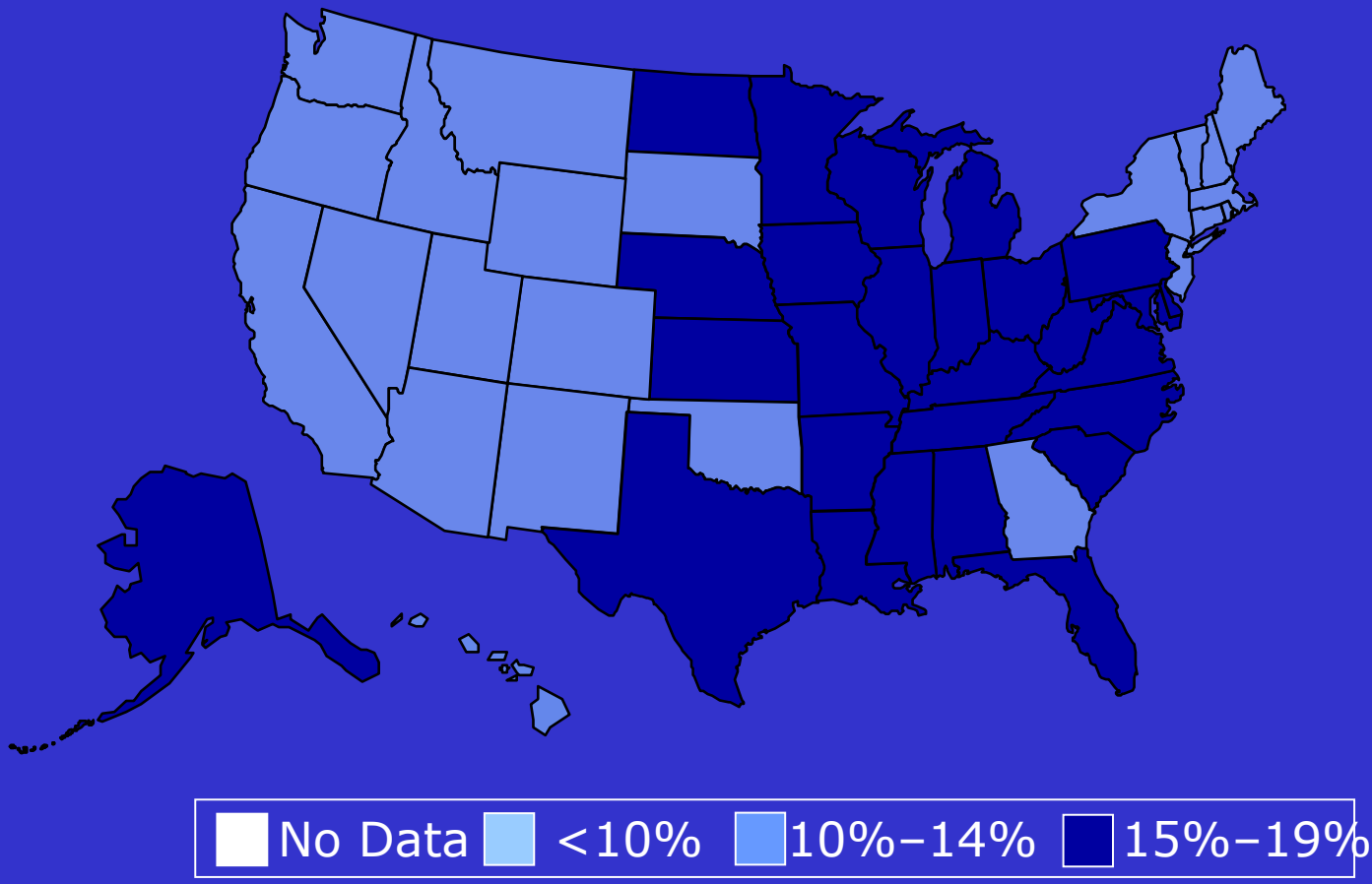

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Obesity Trends Among U.S. Adults: 1996

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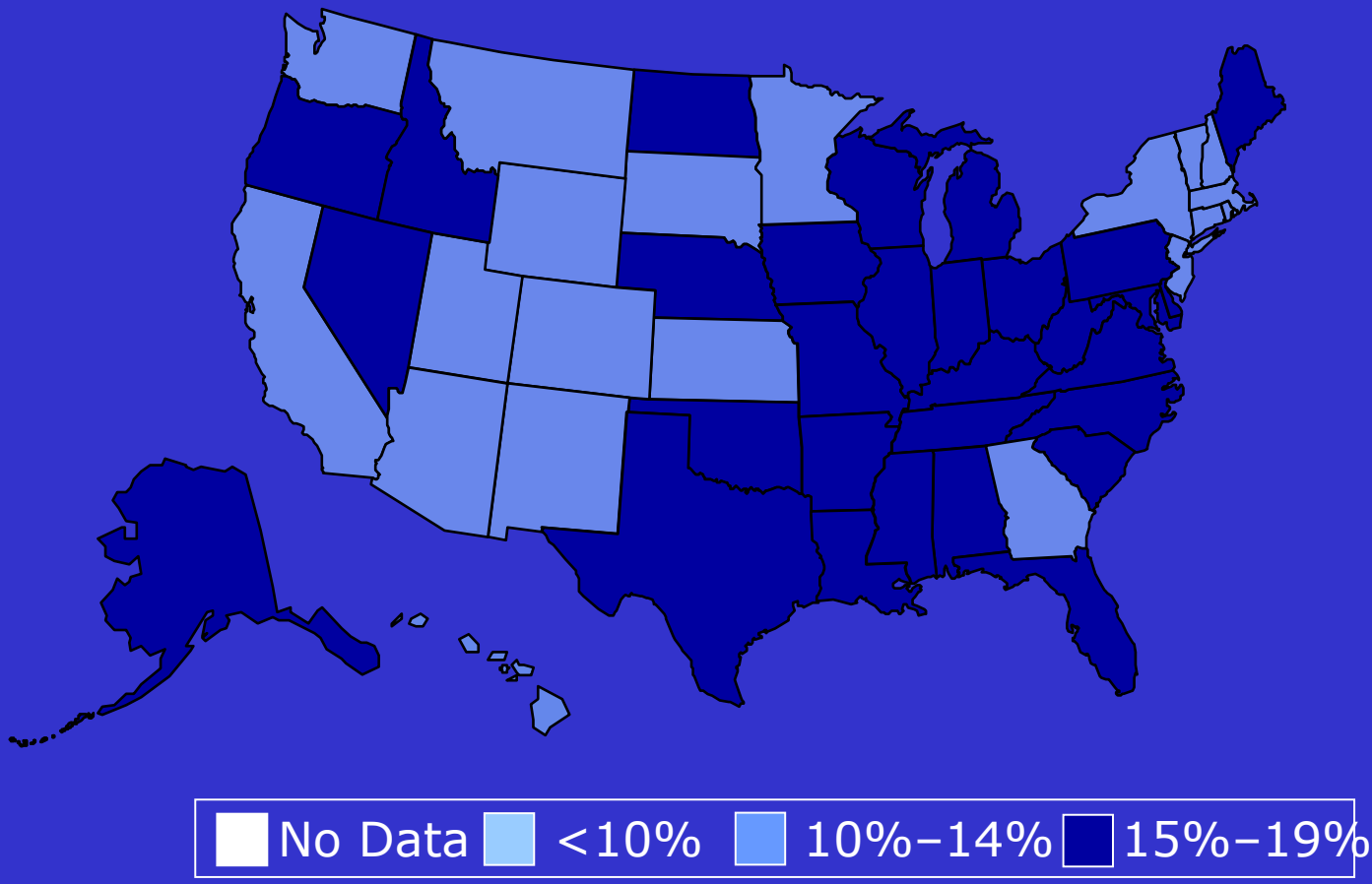

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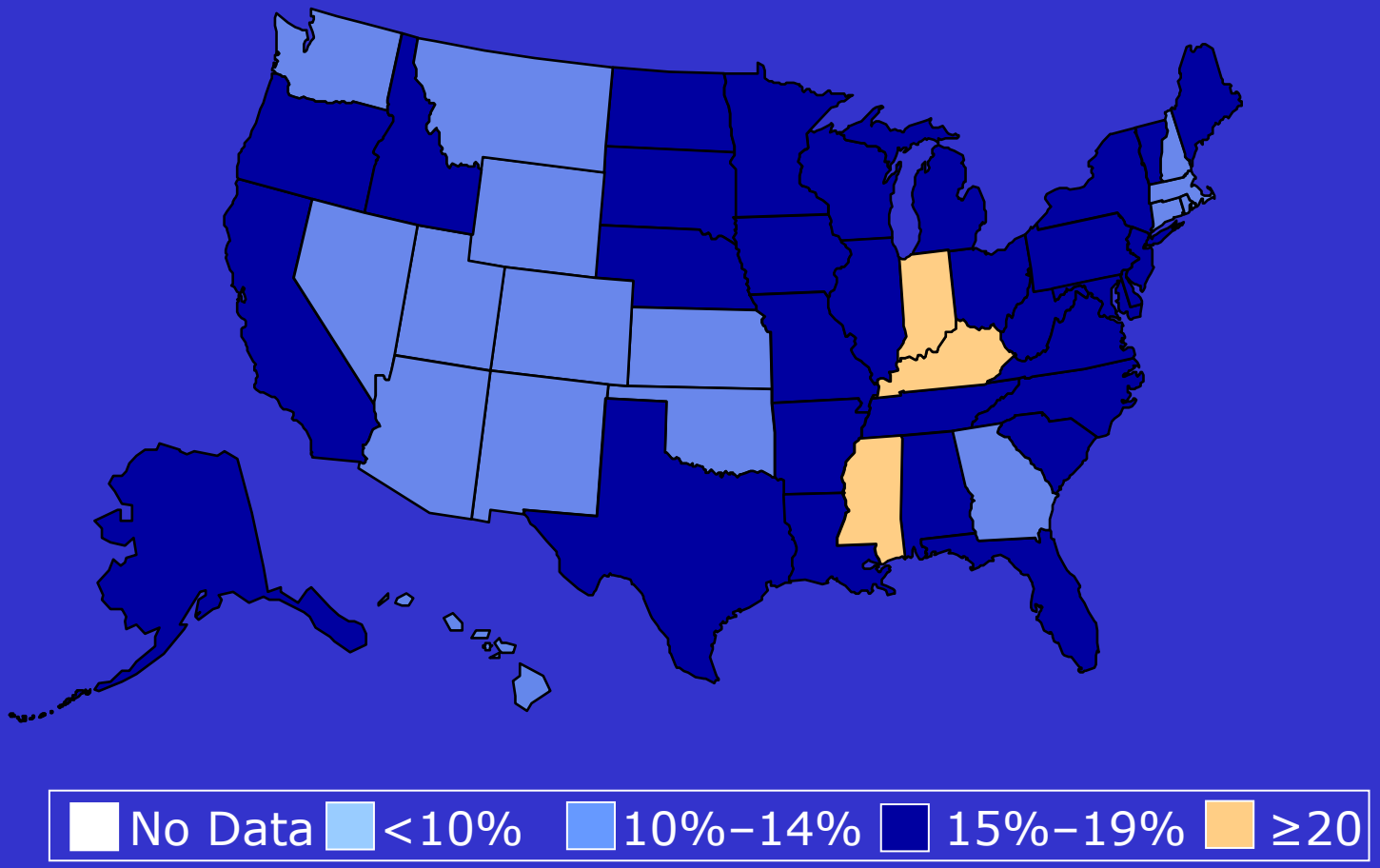

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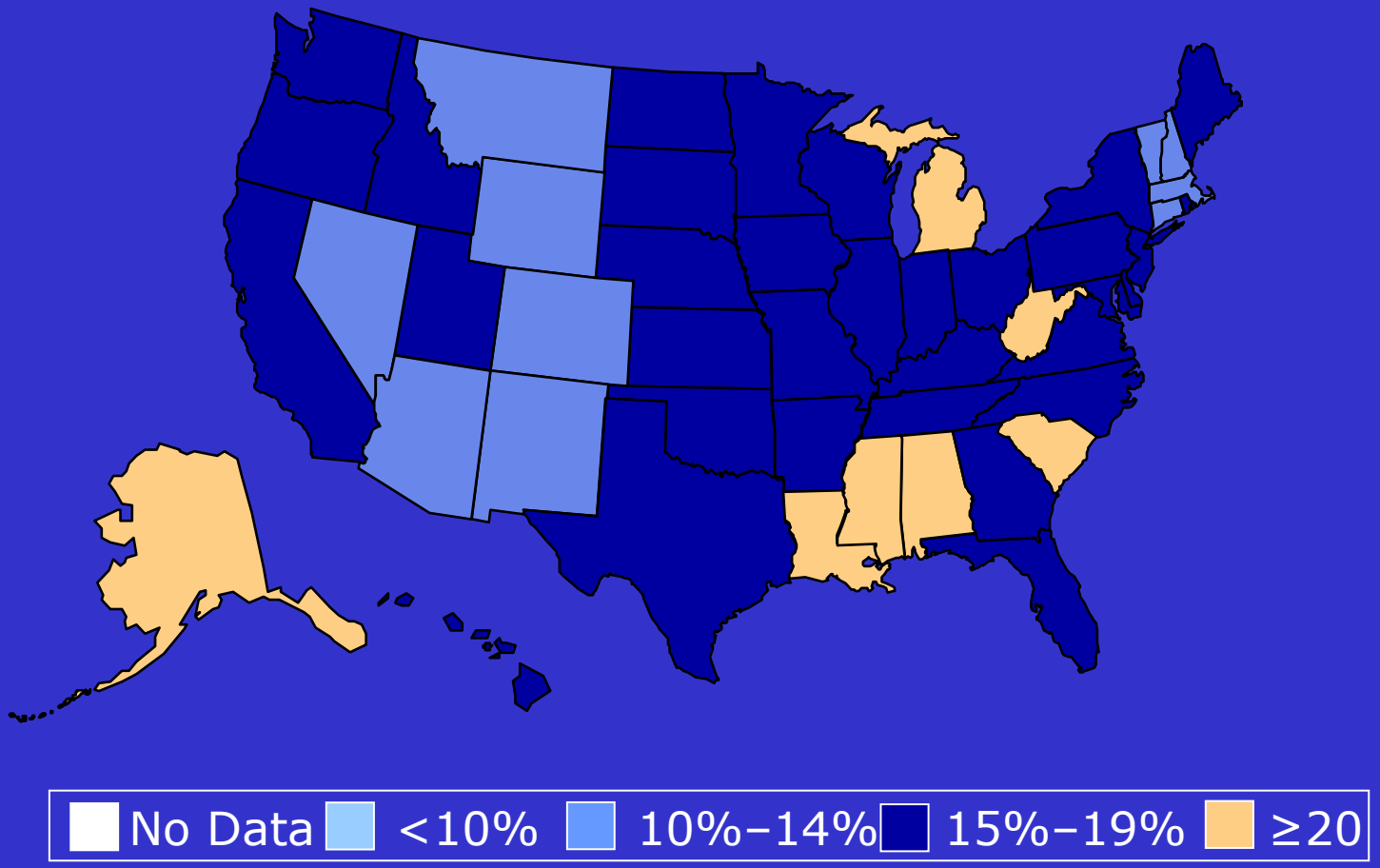

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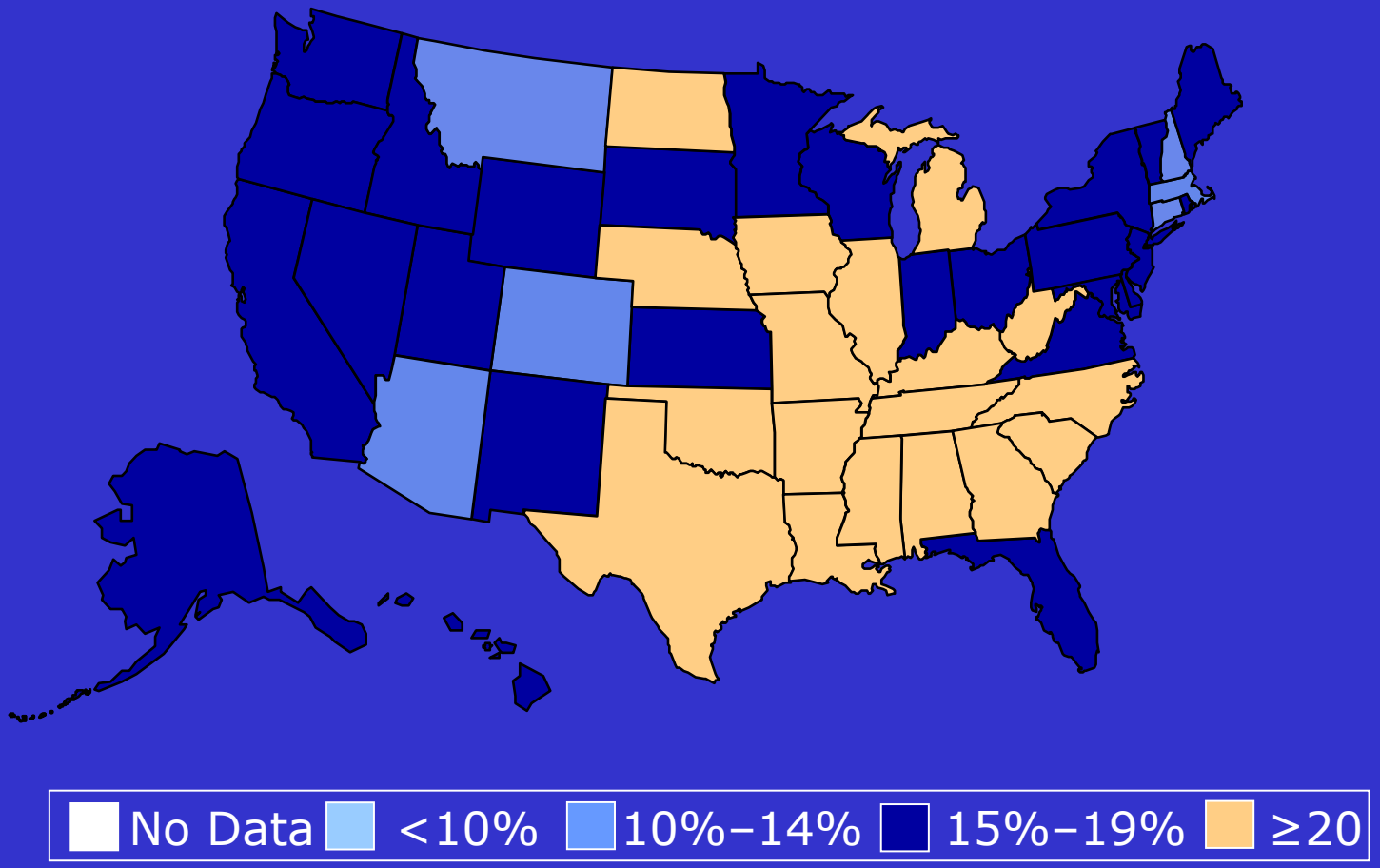

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Obesity Trends Among U.S. Adults: 2000

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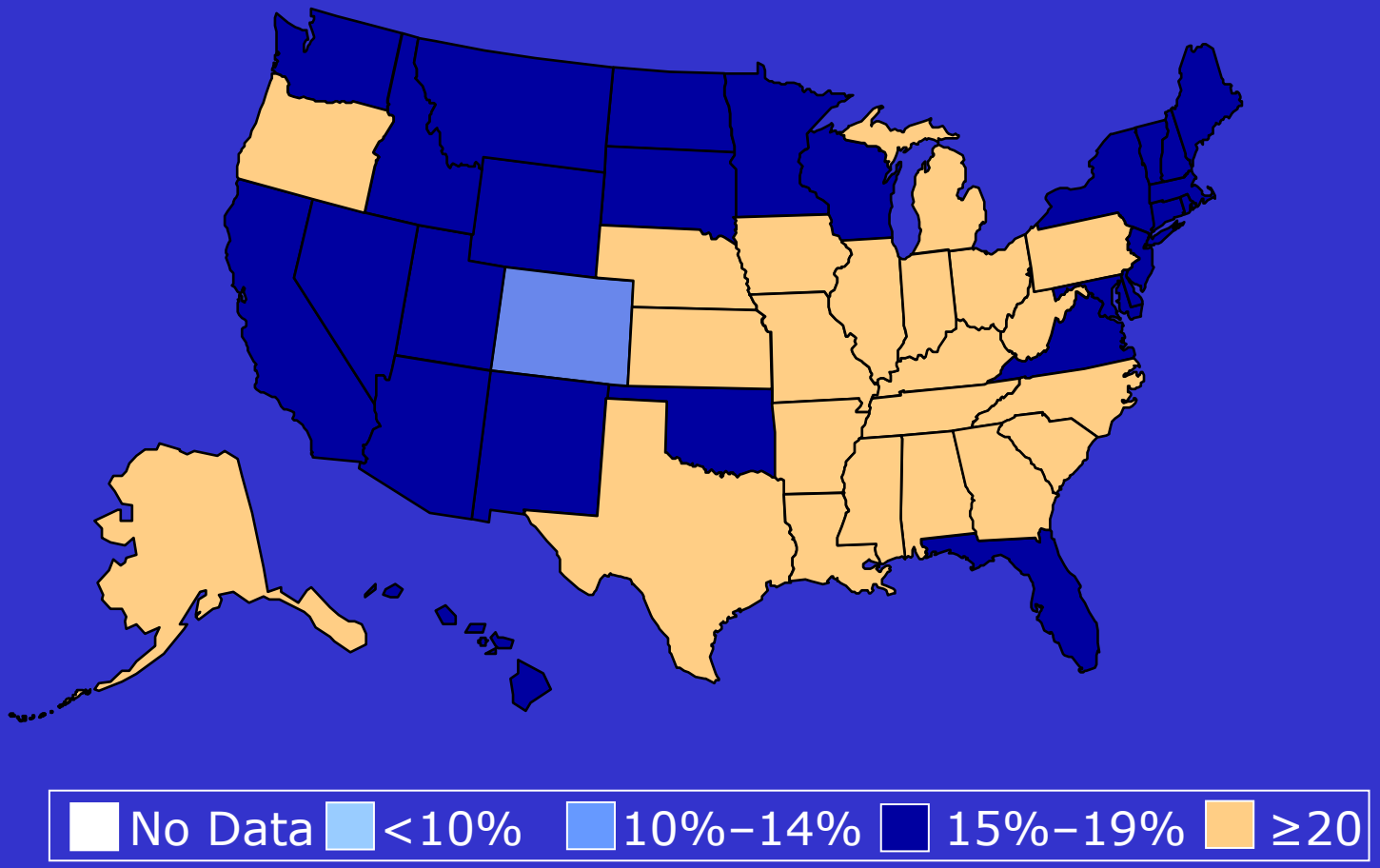

(Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, CDC, 2004)

Obesity Trends Among U.S. Adults: 2001

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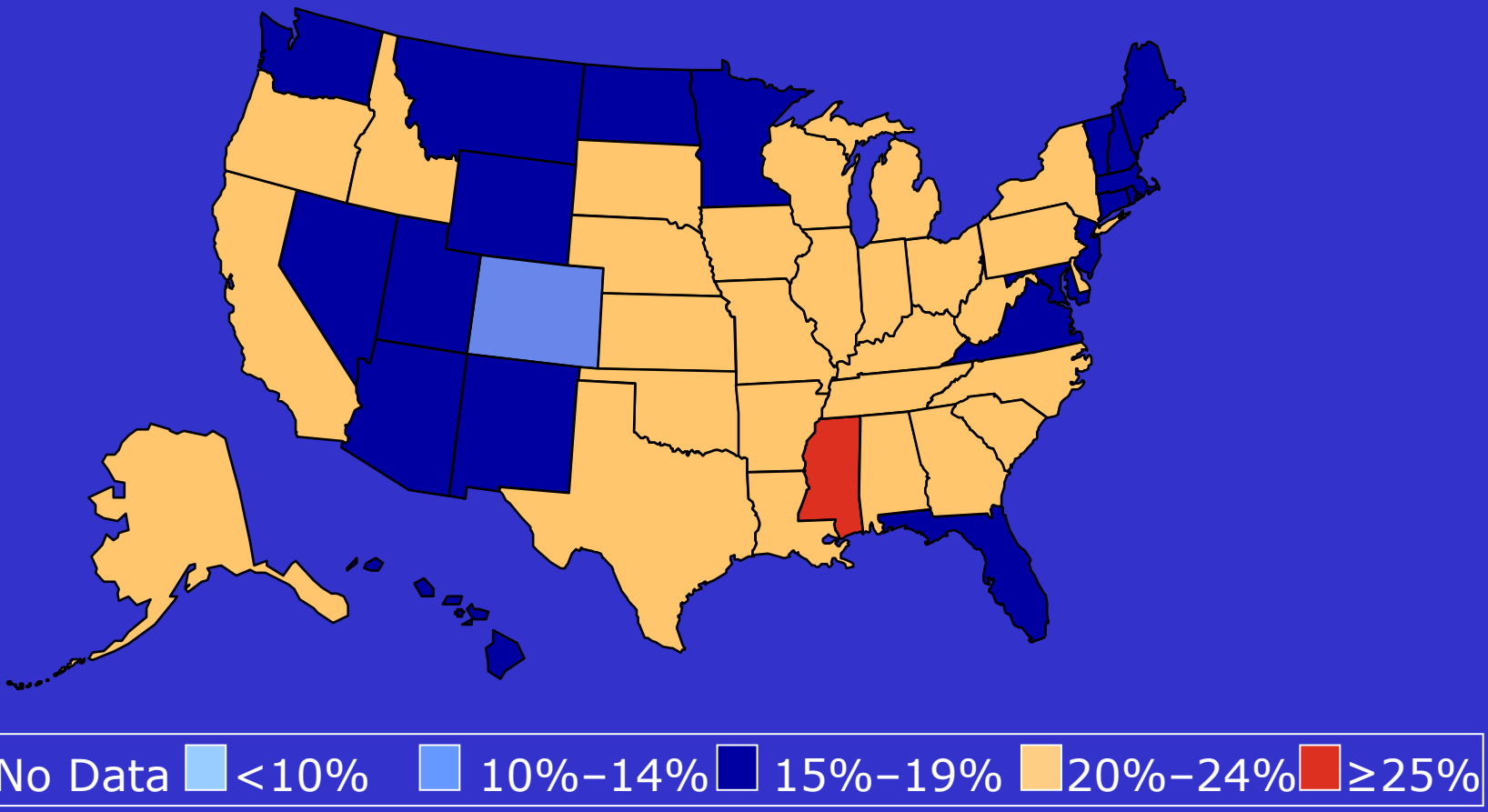

(Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, CDC, 2004)

Obesity Trends Among U.S. Adults: 2002

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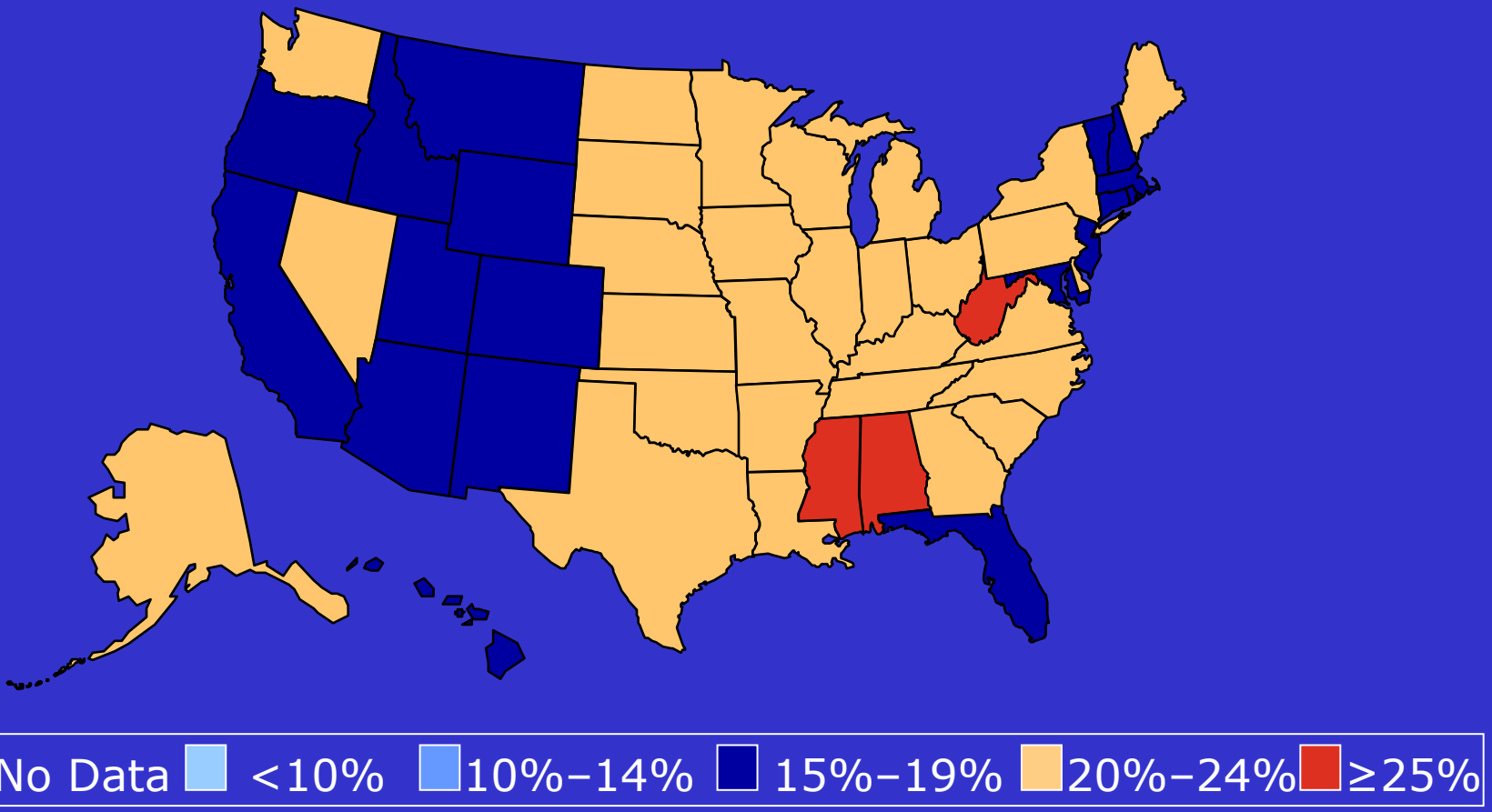

(Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, CDC, 2004)

Obesity Trends Among U.S. Adults: 2003

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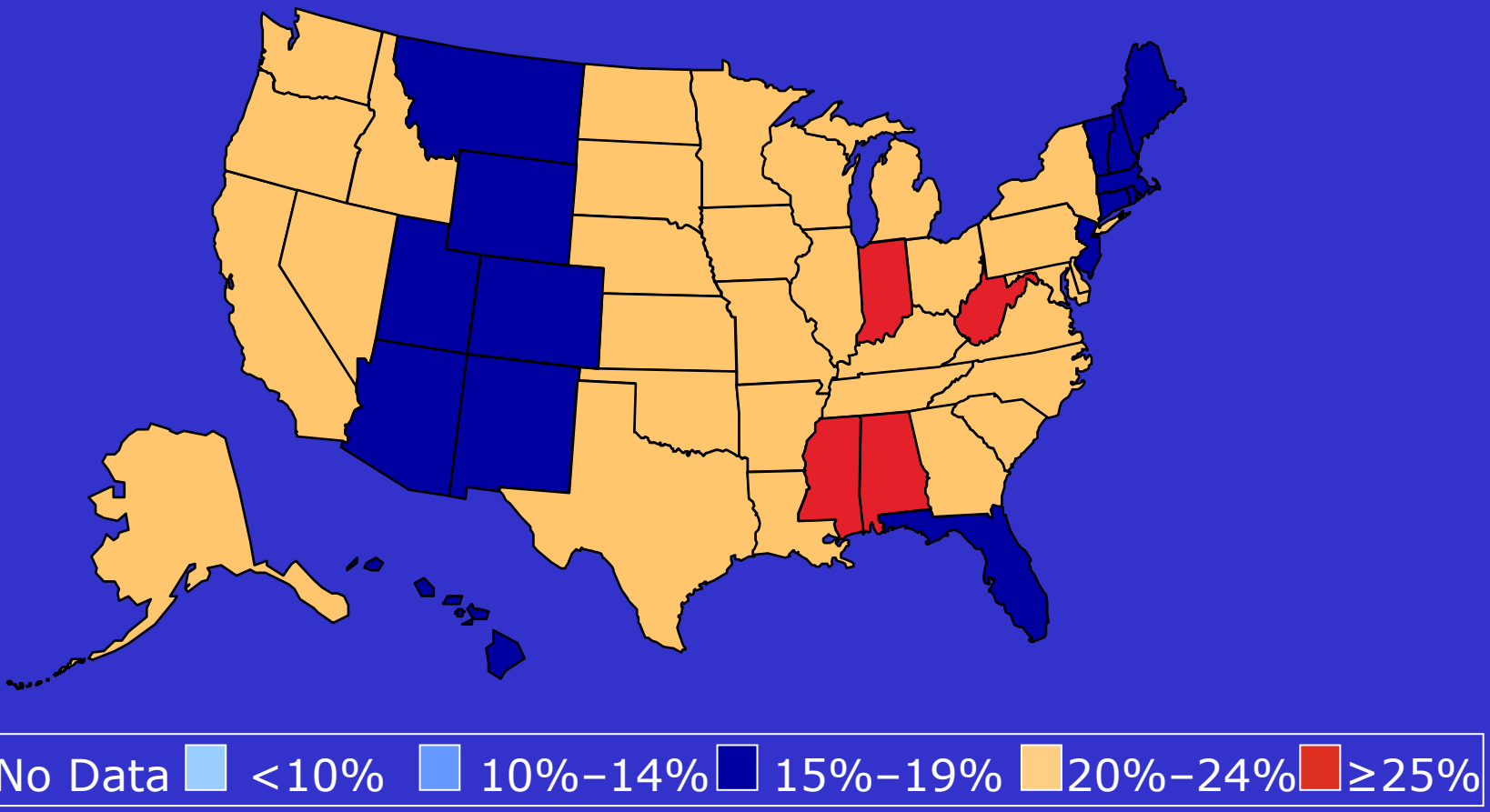

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Obesity Trends Among U.S. Adults: 2004

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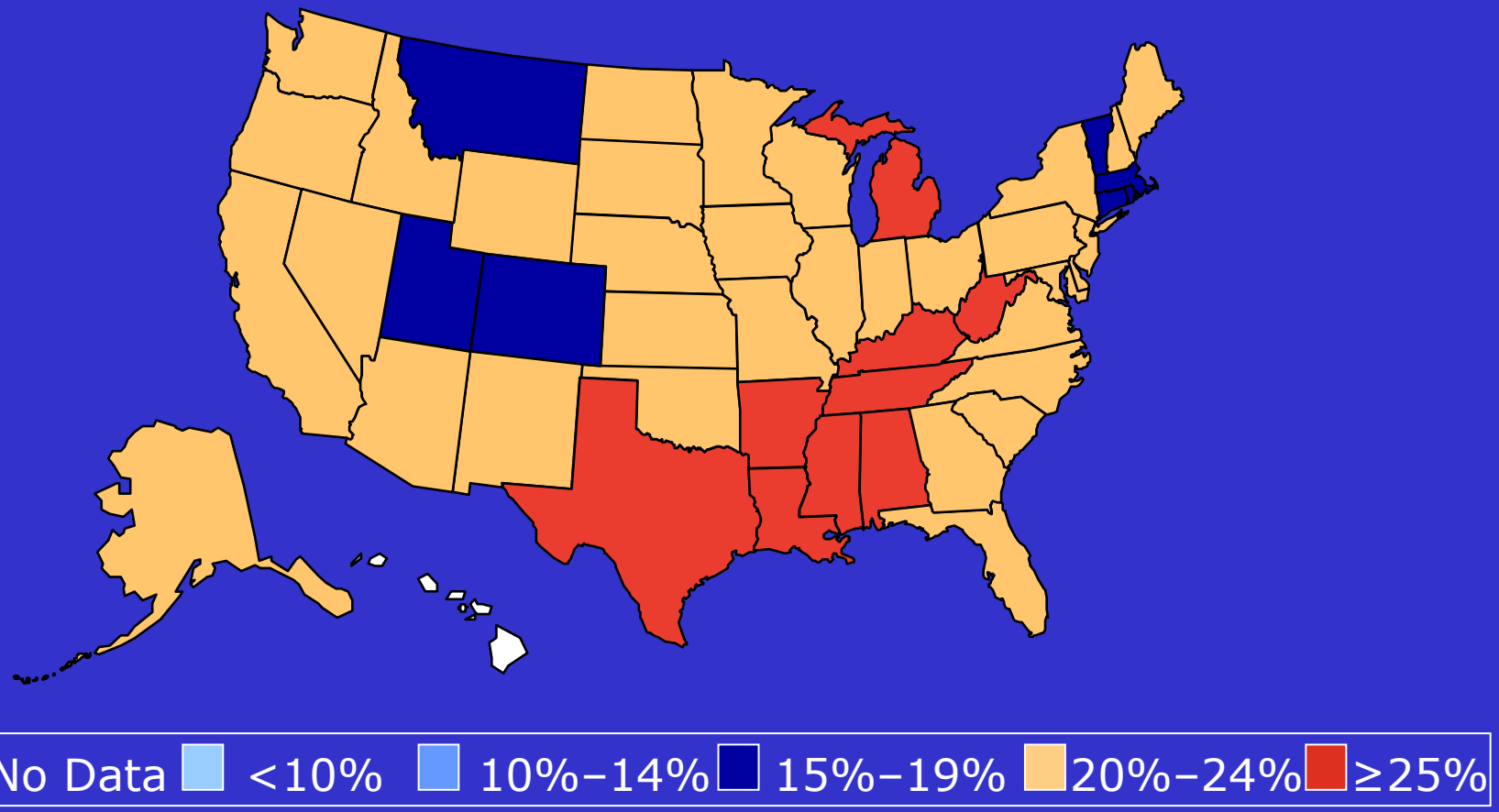

(Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, CDC, 2004)

Promoting Safe Routes to School is an ideal strategy to increase physical activity

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The 5 E's - All Eligible for SRTS Funds

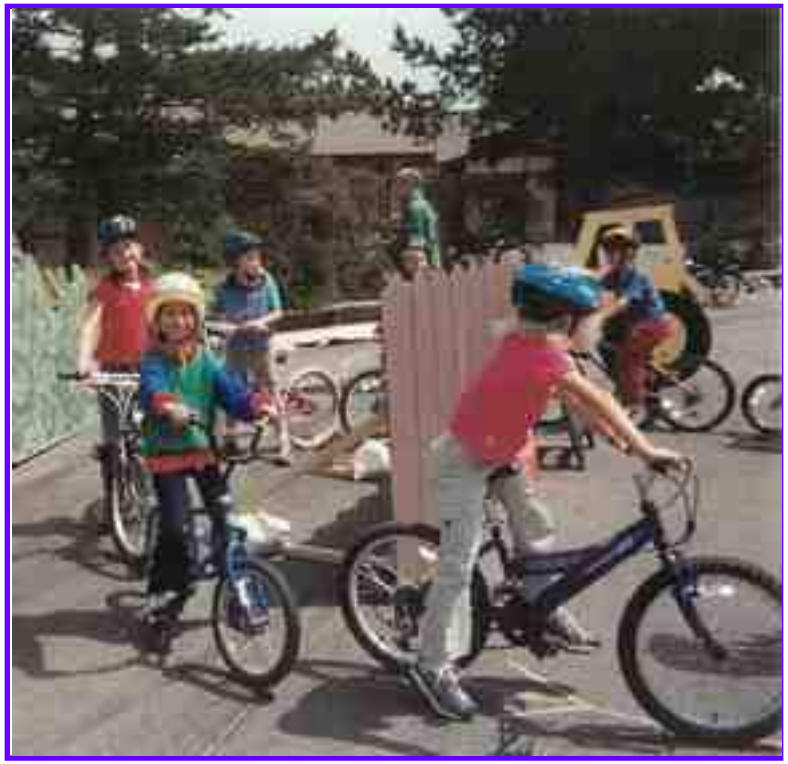
The most successful Safe Routes to School Programs focus on all 5 E's through the creation of a Safe Routes to School Transportation Program that includes:

- Encouragement
- Education
- Engineering
- Enforcement
- Evaluation

Encouragement

- Special events (such as Walk and Roll to School Days)
- Contests
- Newsletters
- Banners
- Posters
- Media attention
- Walking School Buses and Bike Trains

Education

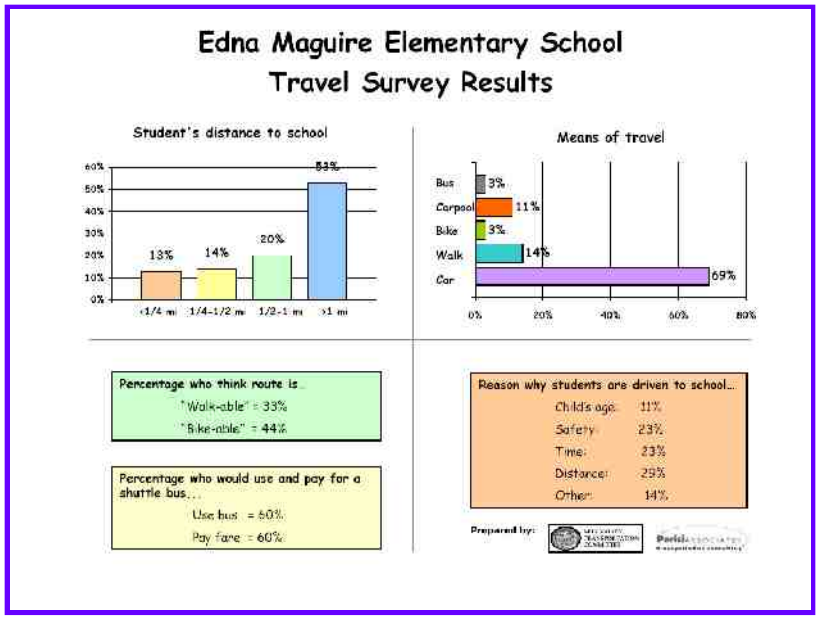


- Traffic safety skills
- Health education
- Environmental education
- On-the-bike trainings
- Safe driving campaigns

Enforcement

- Partner with local law enforcement to ensure that drivers obey the laws
- Initiate community enforcement such as crossing guard programs

Evaluation



It's important throughout the process to monitor and research trends and outcomes through the collection of data related to travel modes, attitudes, distance from school, collision data, etc.

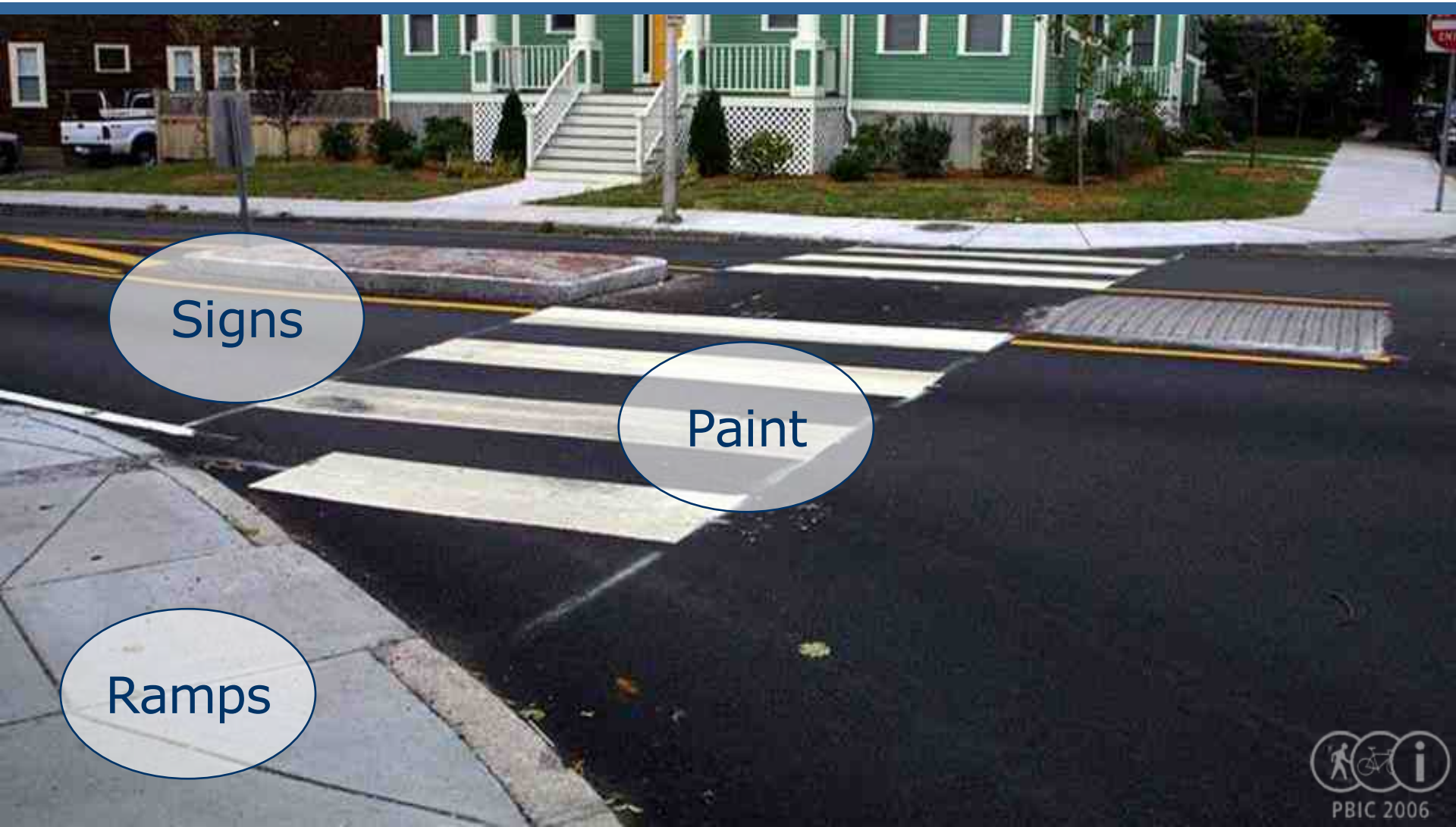
Engineering

The planning, design and construction of such items as:

- Sidewalks
- Bike lanes and paths
- Trails
- Traffic calming and speed reduction
- Crossing improvements
- Secure bicycle parking facilities
- Traffic diversion improvements

Relationships are everything

Focus on low cost, easy to implement solutions



Principles for creating safe crossings

1. Establish a school crossing

3. Reduce crossing distances

5. Use appropriate traffic controls
   -Marked crosswalks
   -Warning signs or flashers
   -Stop signs and traffic signals

6. Slow vehicle speeds

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What's wrong with this picture?

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Road diet – Watch it happen

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Road diet – Watch it happen

Road diet – Watch it happen

The SRTS Program

Steps in Creating a SRTS Program

- Bring together the right people
- Hold a kick-off meeting (a.k.a. School Workshop)
- **Full day** held during the week at or very near the school to review the existing infrastructure and dismissal
- Gather information and identify issues (addresses the 5 E's)
- Identify solutions and develop a plan
- Fund and Act on the plan, assign responsibilities
- Evaluate, make needed changes and keep moving
- ***Workshop - pre-requisite to applying for any grant funds***

The workshop addresses the barriers

Traffic Danger

Inadequate Facilitates

Fear of Crime

School Siting

Funding for a SRTS project

- Projects **must** be aimed to those that benefit grades K-8
- Infrastructure projects must be within 2 miles of a school
- Federal-aid highway funds provided to State DOTs over five Federal fiscal years (FY 2005-2009)
- North Carolina annual funding levels (in millions):

FFY '05	$ 1.00
FFY '06	$ 2.33
FFY '07	$ 3.13 (projected)
FFY '08	$ 3.88 (projected)
FFY '09	$ 4.85 (projected)
Total	***$15.19***

- Breakdown: 10-30% to **non**-infrastructure activities
  70-90% to infrastructure activities

Funding the SRTS Program

- Application / grant process
- Reimbursement program
- No local match permitted
- Eligible recipients: State, local, and regional agencies, including nonprofit organizations
- Jurisdictional levels:
  - School level
  - School system or region-wide
  - State-wide

Goal is to go from this...

…to this!

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